

IN THE CLAIMS:

1.. (Currently Amended) A light diffusing element comprising:

a cylindrical structure which is capable of holding an illuminator at its base end part; and

a lens which is fitted in a leading end part of the cylindrical structure,

5 a passage part which is provided on an optical axis of light emitted from an illuminator and which passes, as first light, light traveling in substantially parallel to the optical axis while not scattering the light;

10 and a diffusion part which is provided around the passage part and which scatters light spreading outward from the optical axis by a predetermined angle or more and emanates the light as second light,

wherein a diffuse reflection surface is provided on the inner surface of the cylindrical structure essentially adjacent the base end side of the lens, and

15 wherein a light irradiation area defined by irradiating [[the]] a first light of the light emitted from the illuminator which directly goes to the lens and passes substantially along an optical axis of the lens is irradiated with [[the]] a second light by the diffusion part of the light emitted from the illuminator which is scattered and reflected on the diffuse reflection surface, and passes through the lens to control an illuminance distribution in the light irradiation area.

2. (Currently Amended) The light diffusing element according to claim 1, wherein the illuminance distribution is so configured as to keep a predetermined illumination evenness level.

3.-5. (Cancelled)

6. (Currently Amended) The light diffusing element according to claim [[4]] 1,
further

comprising a reflection surface which is provided at a side opposite to a light exit
direction of the illuminator and which has a reflecting surface direction with a component facing
5 the light exit direction side.

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Original) The light diffusing element according to claim 1,
wherein the illuminator is an LED, an SLD, an LD, an EL element, a cold
cathode-ray source, or a light exit end of a light guide.

9. (Cancelled)

10. (New) The light diffusing element according to claim 1, wherein the lens is a spherical lens.

11. (New) A light diffusing element comprising

a lens which is provided on an optical axis of light emitted from an illuminator, wherein a passage part which passes, as first light, is light traveling substantially parallel to the optical axis while not scattering and provided in a predetermined area around the optical axis of the lens which faces to the illuminator, and

5 a diffusion part which scatters light spreading outward from the optical axis by a predetermined angle or greater and emanates additional light as a second light, the diffusion part is provided at a side peripheral part of the lens which faces to the illuminator enclosing the passage part,

10 wherein a light irradiation area defined by irradiating the first light is irradiated with the second light by the diffusion part to control illuminance distribution in the light irradiation area.

12. (New) The light diffusing element according to claim 11, wherein the illuminance distribution is so configured as to keep a predetermined even luminous level.

13. (New) The light diffusing element according to claim 11, further comprising a reflection surface which is provided at a side opposite to a light exit direction of the illuminator and which has a reflecting surface direction with a component facing the light exit direction side.

14. (New) The light diffusing element according to claim 11, wherein the illuminator is an LED, an SLD, an LD, an EL element, a cold cathode-ray source, or a light exit end of a light guide.

15. (New) The light diffusing element according to claim 11, wherein the lens is a spherical lens.

16. (New) A light diffusing element comprising

an illuminator;

a structure having a through-hole which is provided on an optical axis of light emitted from the illuminator and which passes, as first light, light traveling substantially parallel to an optical axis of the through hole while not scattering the light; and

5 a diffusion part which is provided around the through hole and which scatters light spreading outward from the optical axis by a predetermined angle or more and emanates the light as second light through the through hole,

10 wherein a light irradiation area defined by irradiating the first light is irradiated with the second light by the diffusion part to control illuminance distribution in the light irradiation area.

17. (New) The light diffusing element according to claim 16, wherein the illuminance distribution is so configured as to keep a predetermined even luminance level.

18. (New) The light diffusing element according to claim 16, further comprising a reflection surface which is provided at a side opposite to a light exit direction of the illuminator and which has a reflecting surface direction with a component facing the light exit direction side.

19. (New) The light diffusing element according to claim 16,
wherein the diffusion part is composed of a transmission and scattering member
which scatters light while passing the light.

20. (New) The light diffusing element according to claim 16, wherein the illuminator
is an LED, an SLD, an LD, an EL element, a cold cathode-ray source, or a light exit end of a
light guide.

21. (New) The light diffusing element according to claim 16, wherein a spherical
lens is mounted on the structure above the through hole.

22. (New) The light diffusing element according to Claim 21 wherein the structure
includes a cylindrical intermediate element mounting the illuminator with a traverse reflection
surface surrounding the illuminator and the diffusion part extends upward from the reflection
surface to the spherical lens, the cylindrical intermediate element includes a lens holding groove
5 to support the spherical lens and a leading end element is mounted across the lens holding groove
to secure the spherical lens in the lens holding groove.